

Consent Item (B) 07-25-2019

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

☒ Action ☐ Information

MEAD Number:
202096

Resolution:
☐ Yes ☒ No

TITLE:

Fairfax County Student Bus Pass Pilot Extension

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Staff requests Board approval to extend the Fairfax County Free Student Bus Pass Program pilot for one year.

PURPOSE:

Staff is seeking Board of Directors approval to extend the pilot of the Free Student Bus Pass Program for Fairfax County for one year.

DESCRIPTION:

Key Highlights:

- WMATA Board of Directors approved Resolution 2018-29, which authorized a one-year fare buydown agreement with Fairfax County to reimburse WMATA the full costs and fares associated with Metrobus rides taken on select routes.
- The Free Student Bus Pass Program pilot was introduced in July 2018 at Justice High School
- Thirty-five percent of Justice High School students were issued SmarTrip® cards based on Fairfax County's eligibility criteria
- Approximately 32,000 trips have been taken on Metrobus; generating approximately \$64,000 in revenue during the 2018-2019 school year

Background and History:

In September 2015, Fairfax Connector launched a pilot to provide a Free Student Bus Pass to middle and high school students in Fairfax County ("County"). Over the course of the pilot and the larger program, the County identified a coverage gap - not all schools are served by Fairfax Connector.

In June 2018, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors authorized a pilot to pay WMATA the cost associated with providing free access to Metrobus service for certain Justice High School students as determined by Fairfax County's eligibility criteria. The WMATA Board of Directors approved Resolution 2018-29, which launched the pilot and authorized a one-year fare buydown agreement with Fairfax County. The program facilitates student ridership in Fairfax County, alleviates the financial burden on students who pay for Metrobus out of pocket and provides an alternative for students who formerly used other modes of transportation. Recently, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee approved extending the pilot Free Student Bus Pass Program through August 31, 2020.

Discussion:

A recent survey of Justice High School students highlighted their perspectives and ridership trends throughout the Virginia service corridor. The top Metrobus routes identified in the survey included the 28A, 26A, 16A and 1A. Approximately 70 percent of students were first time riders using Metro as an alternative to school bus transportation. Over 60 percent of students expressed interest in expanded Metrobus routes, extended hours and the addition of Metrorail. Overall, the program broadened student access to transit services, jobs and regional access.

Since the pilot's inception, the Free Student Bus Pass Program for Fairfax County generated approximately \$64,000 in additional WMATA revenue during the 2018-2019 school year. A one-year extension will continue Fairfax County's reimbursement of fare on select Metrobus routes based on student ridership which will have a favorable impact on WMATA.

FUNDING IMPACT:

The Free Student Bus Pass Program for Fairfax County generated approximately \$64,000 during the 2018-2019 school year. A one-year extension will continue Fairfax County's reimbursement of fare on select Metrobus routes based on student ridership which will have a favorable impact on WMATA.	
Project Manager:	Tracey Foster
Project Department/Office:	CFO/TRES

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	Resolution 2018-29 - Board of Directors authorized a one-year pilot of a Free Student Bus Pass Program at Justice High School and fare buydown agreement with Fairfax County.
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Anticipated actions after presentation	Develop fare buydown agreement to establish program terms, conditions, cost and joint signatures. Engage stakeholders (BUS, Fairfax County, COUN, AFC, GOVR) for implementation strategies.
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RECOMMENDATION:

Approval to extend the pilot of the Free Student Bus Pass Program for Justice High School students in Fairfax County for one year.

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE AN EXTENSION OF FARE
BUYDOWN AGREEMENT FOR FREE STUDENT BUS PASS PILOT PROGRAM
FOR FAIRFAX COUNTY

RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, Compact Section 79 permits WMATA to enter into reduced fare (fare buydown) agreements and Resolution 2011-30 requires Board approval for all fare buydown agreements; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 2018-29 established a one-year pilot of a Free Student Bus Pass Program for Justice High School students in Fairfax County and authorized the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer (GM/CEO) to negotiate and execute a fare buydown agreement for Fairfax County to pay WMATA the full costs and fares associated with the pilot; and

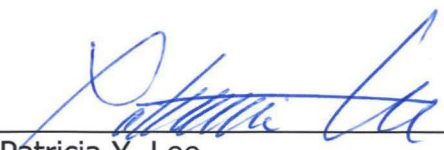
WHEREAS, The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee approved extension of the Free Student Bus Pass Program pilot for Justice High School students for one additional year through August 31, 2020;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board authorizes the GM/CEO or designee to extend the pilot of the Free Student Bus Pass Program for Justice High School students through August 31, 2020, and to negotiate and execute a fare buydown agreement with Fairfax County to pay WMATA the full costs and fares associated with the extended pilot; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That, in order to continue the Free Student Bus Pass Program for Justice High School students without interruption, this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Patricia Y. Lee
General Counsel